

REMARKS

Amendments

The claims are amended to use language in accordance with conventional US practice. The claims are also amended to eliminate language regarding preferences and possibilities. See, e.g., claims 2, 7, 8, 11-13, 16-18, and 22-24.

Election

In the Office Action of October 16, 2008, the claims are restricted into two groups, i.e., Group I, claims 1-7 and 22-24, and Group II, claims 8-21. In response to the Restriction Requirement, applicants hereby elect Group II, claims 8-21. The Restriction Requirement is, however, traversed.

In the Restriction, it is asserted that Groups I and II do not relate to a single general inventive concept because the allegedly lack the same or corresponding technical feature under PCT rule 13.2. Applicants disagree.

The Restriction asserts that the technical feature which links the claims of Groups I and II is “a sintering tool.” However, this technical feature is not simply a sintering tool, but it is specifically the sintering tool described in claims 1 and 8.

The Restriction also alleges that the “sintering tool” does not make a contribution over the prior art, and then further asserts that the “sintering tool” is known in the art, citing Osamu (JP 10-09520). However, this is merely a conclusory statement without any supporting evidence/arguments. The Restriction fails to demonstrate how Osamu (JP 10-09520) discloses the sintering tool. In particular, the Restriction fails to demonstrate how the disclosure of Osamu (JP 10-09520) describes or renders obvious each and every feature of the sintering tool described in applicants’ claims 1 and 8.

Thus, the Restriction fails to establish that the claims do not relate to a single general inventive concept under PCT rule 13.2. Withdrawal of the Restriction is respectfully requested.

In any event, upon determination that the elected product claims are allowable, applicants request rejoinder of the withdrawn method claims pursuant to MPEP 821.04(b).

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees associated with this response or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 13-3402.

Respectfully submitted,

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